

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Monday, September 19, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

In person at Westminster, VT Town Hall

Selectboard Present: Jason Perry (Chair), Katrina Hamilton (Clerk) Kevin Hughes (Vice Chair) and Craig Allen

Staff Present: Alison Bigwood (Interim Town Manager/Zoning Administrator) Charles (Chuck) Lawrence (Road Foreman) and Millie Barry (Clerk)

Others Present: Cole Streeter – 1 person for FACT TV and Alice Caggiano present for approximately one-half hour

1. **Call to Order:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection is available on the FACT TV Facebook page, Town of Westminster website or by calling the Westminster Town Hall.
 2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
 3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Minutes of September 14, 2022 meeting minutes will approved September 28, 2022
 4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
 5. **Unfinished Business:** (Discussion/Action)
 - A. Route 121 Bridge – update – Jason Perry read an email from JB McCarthy, Highway Division, VT Agency of Transportation dated September 1, 2022. In part the email noted the highway division had met with Renaud Brothers and the SOV Construction Section confirming:
 1. New structural steel delivery would be 12-15 months to put construction out to 2024.
 2. Based on steel delivery date both contractor and Agency desire to cancel the current contract and advertise the project for new construction bid.
 3. Cancellation of current contract requires approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) due to their funding of 80% of the project. This process is underway.
 4. The Agency is beginning process of programming the required funds for re-design of the structure and construction and developing a new schedule for advertising the bid.
 5. They have begun consultation with their consulting engineer and will begin design of the new structural steel and develop a new set of contract plans along with an expected bid advertising date to be determined.
- Mr. McCarthy noted he would keep the Towns of Westminster and Rockingham up to date on the project.
Craig Allen suggested creating a tab on Westminster's Facebook page and adding the letter to let residents and others know the official status of the bridge construction.

Jason Perry noted there had been two recent articles in newspapers indicating the Town of Rockingham's opinion the bridge be redesigned, and the project development plan start anew. Mr. Perry said the project is not a start or do over. In his opinion, Rockingham does not have 'skin in the game'. Mr. Lawrence noted there had been a motor vehicle accident at the bridge site 9/19/2022 where a box truck took out a section of guardrails and hit the end of the bridge. Mr. Lawrence will contact JB McCarthy regarding the impact if any of the accident. Perry also suggested the Board look at the budget as the project costs had increased substantially and at the time the project could take place there could be a second bridge in Westminster West slated for repair.

6. New Business: (Discussion/Action)

- A. Emergency Management director discussion – Mr. Perry read a letter from Ben Masure dated 9/14/2022. Mr. Masure indicated in part; he was happy to continue acting as the Emergency Management Director for years to come. He noted the director was separate from his position as a highway department employee and believed there should be a stipend associated with the position due to the requirement to attend meetings, work on projects associated with Hazard Mitigation Plan and update LEMP (Landscape Ecological Management Plan). Mr. Masure suggested a stipend of \$4,000.00 per year. Mr. Hughes noted he was open to having a conversation to discuss the proposal with Mr. Masure at a future date. The item will be tabled to another meeting.
- B. Piggery Road bid award – Mr. Perry said the project was for stream bank stabilization through an NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) grant. Bids were from Zaluzny \$167,600.00 and Bazin Brothers \$124,000.00 noting the Town's match was \$33,140.00 if under the NRCS proposed project amount. Mr. Allen motioned to accept the bid of Bazin Brothers for \$124,000.00. Mr. Hughes seconded; motion carried 4-0 by voice vote. Cole Streeter requested the project plan to make a contact regarding incorporating the dry hydrant currently at the site into the proposal.
- C. September Financials – (Revenue and Expenditure Report – current year included in packet) - The Board discussed \$4,125.00 paid out in the bridge expense line. Mr. Lawrence believed this amount may have been paid to the SOV (State of VT) and in turn paid to Renaud for coring's, bridge inspection etc. completed in anticipation of the 121-bridge project. Alison Bigwood will research the person/company/agency and reason money was paid.
- D. Cemetery Deeds: Mr. Hughes motioned on September 19, 2022 in the amount of \$310.00 three (3) burials in Section E, Row 2, graves 88, 89, 90 in the Westminster New Cemetery and perpetual care thereon; subject restrictions imposed by law to Peter Van Oot. Also, On September 19, 2022 for \$310.00 one burial site in Section E, Row 2, Grave 92 in Westminster New Cemetery and perpetual care thereon; subject to restrictions imposed by law to Tom Deiley. Mr. Allen seconded the motion, motion carried 4-0 by voice vote.
- E. Town Manager's Report:

1. Ms. Bigwood said the audit was canceled on September 16, 2022 as trial balances were not balanced. As requested, she sent to Chad from Sullivan and Powers trial balance and journal entries for the fire district and Town of Westminster for the last fiscal year.
2. There have been numerous complaints from residents in all areas of Town regarding speeding. Ms. Bigwood noted Deputy Fisher is the officer assigned to Westminster and in a conversation with sheriff Mark Anderson, Mr. Anderson said he was aware of the speeding problem and did not have a solution.
3. Mascoma's government bank representative will be in contact with Ms. Bigwood in the next few days after meeting with the bank's CFO (chief financial officer) regarding different options for Westminster bank accounts.
4. The Westminster Historical Society has reported a good year. They are open to suggestions and new ideas for 2023.
5. Ms. Bigwood received an email from Susan Harlow recommending Daniel Horviss, e-solutions.org as Westminster's website coordinator at \$2,000.00 yearly cost. Katrina Hamilton suggested once the website was set up and running, adjustments were minor noting \$2,000.00 was quite a lot of money. Ms. Bigwood added the prior website person was paid one half of the budgeted amount and discontinued working after some initial design work. Mr. Perry suggested Kelley Thayer write up something for the board stating what she (Kelley does) and the tasks to be completed by a website coordinator.

In another matter: Mr. Hughes noted he was not recommending a change but noting that Walpole Savings Bank had merged with NHTrust. Walpole Savings Bank will have full access to US treasury bill market. He added at present the cash market rate is over 3 percent and Westminster is receiving .021 and every penny counts.

F. Road Foreman's Report: Mr. Lawrence reported the School Street project was complete and looked good. The project had taken less time than originally thought. The road crew will soon begin work on replacement of the culvert on Windmill Hill South. Bazin Brothers will begin the Piggery Road project in November and contact the State for an extension of the permit to work in the brook. The department is also working on Sand Hill Road to alleviate run-off into a neighbor's pond.

G. Executive Session – Mr. Hughes motioned for the Board to move to executive session following Other Business on the agenda to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Allen seconded; motion carried 4-0 by voice vote.

7. Boards, Committees and Commissions: Mr. Perry noted the next ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) meeting would be September 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

8. Other Business: Cole Streeter said the Prudential Committee had approved voting November 8 for the general election take place at the Westminster Fire Station.

Mr. Perry noted it was reasonable the Town would cover the cleaning expense of the meeting room after the election.

In another matter: Mr. Hughes apologized for his inability to fulfill his duties at a prior meeting and noted the absence of a second Board member due to travel. He suggested the Board reverse its prior position and appoint an additional Board member until the March 2023 election due to the possibility of illness, being absent or withdrawal by a Board member. The other Board members agreed with Mr. Hughes. Mr. Allen questioned how the process would proceed. The Board agreed to put the matter on the next meeting agenda to discuss. Those people previously expressing an interest in the Board will be notified regarding an appointment. Mr. Perry noted the Board was not required to appoint anyone that had previously expressed an interest. Mr. Allen motioned to advertise the vacancy locally on the Westminster Town website and Highway website and to move quickly with the process of appointment. Mr. Hughes seconded; motion carried 4-0 by voice vote.

In another matter: Mr. Hughes suggested, due to the extraordinary service provided by emergency personnel and others during the July 2021 storm, the Chair of the Board and another Board member meet with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management) regarding FEMA's current structure/rules regarding compensation during such emergency situations. He believed compensation in these circumstances was fair, equitable and correct. Katrina Hamilton volunteered to be the Board member. Mr. Streeter said time and costs for vehicle expense, mileage etc. were submitted without compensation or follow-up from FEMA.

In another matter: Mr. Perry questioned the contents and what to do with things stored in the box trailer parked in the yard of the post office. Mr. Allen will make a contact to the owner of the trailer to check on status believing it was on loan to the Town.

9. Date of Next Meeting: September 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

The Board moved to executive session at 7:27 p.m.

10. Adjournment: The Board convened regular session at 8:51 p.m. Kevin Hughes motioned to adjourn. Craig Allen seconded; motion carried by 4-0 voice vote. No action was taken after the executive session.

Clerk

Date